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ANDHRA BEST STATE TO DO BUSINESS: GOVT RANKINGS

Andhra has topped the latest ease of doing business rankings, prepared by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry

U.P. AT NUMBER 2, TELANGANA DROPS TO 3RD

Uttar Pradesh, which ranked 12th in 2018, has come second in the 2019 rankings, while Telangana, which was second, has slipped to the third position. Madhya Pradesh (4th), Jharkhand (5th), Chhattisgarh (6th), Himachal Pradesh (7th), Rajasthan (8th), West Bengal (9th) and Gujarat (10th) are the others states in the top 10 | P7, 10, 12

K'TAKA SLIPS TO 17TH, KERALA TO 28TH

- Karnataka dropped from 8th to 17th position. Tamil Nadu ranked 14th, slightly bettering its previous year's rank of 15th
- Kerala slipped seven places to 28th while Odisha came 34th
- The ranking is based on implementation of the Centre's Business Reform Action Plan 2018-19, which comprises 181 reform points

12th

RANK FOR DELHI, UP FROM 23RD IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Insurance body moves SC against private hospitals for 'profiteering'

SUMI SUKANYA DUTTA @ New Delhi

THE alleged profiteering by private hospitals in India through the treatment of Covid-19 patients has forced the statutory body of insurance companies to seek the Supreme Court's intervention.

In an affidavit filed before the apex court a few days ago, the General Insurance Council (GIC) alleged that private hospitals are overcharging insured patients, even in cases where there are no complications or pre-existing illnesses. The GIC said its members have received more than one lakh Covid-related insurance claims so far.

It warned that reckless profiteering by private hospitals, if left unchecked, will lead to insurance premiums shooting up in the near future. While there have been many complaints of private hospitals overcharging Covid-19 patients, this is the first time an insurance body has expressed concern. "It is respectfully submitted that in order to bring confidence and to have clarity on the billing structure, there is a need for proper monitoring of the treatment costs by the private hospitals and take suitable action against the violators," the affidavit said.

The plea cites cases of hospitals overcharging insured patients. One of the cases mentioned in the affidavit is that of a Chennai hospital, which billed ₹14 lakh for the Covid treatment, including 35-day hospitalisation, of an insured person. When objected by the insurance company, the final cost, was brought down to less than ₹4.5 lakh. The GIC also alleged that private hospitals are charging higher than normal rates for consumables like PPE kits. P9

Covid: India to overtake Brazil

India is all set to overtake Brazil to become the world's second-worst Covid-hit country

Top three

86,432

New cases between Friday and Saturday morning. This is more than the total Covid-19 cases reported in mainland China since the outbreak in December 2019

70,072 recoveries since Friday morning

1,089 deaths

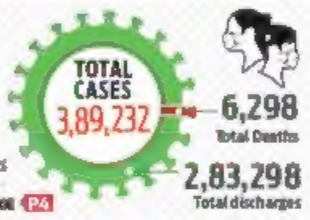
52%

of all Covid-19 deaths in the last 24 hours reported from Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka

ACTIVE CASES **8.46 LAKH**

RECOVERED **31.07 LAKH**

DEATHS **69,561**



Source: Union Health Ministry

India draws the red line, nudges China to behave

Defence minister Rajnath Singh tells his Chinese counterpart to learn to respect LAC, avoid making attempts to change status quo

MAYANK SINGH AND PUSHKAR SANAKAR @ New Delhi

INDIA did not blink once during the two-and-a-half-hour intense meeting with China on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in Moscow. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh was as direct as possible during his interaction with his Chinese counterpart General Wei Fenghe, stating that Indian forces are determined to protect the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Drawing attention to the fact that Indian troops have always taken a responsible approach towards border management, Singh said China's aggressive behaviour and attempts to unilaterally alter the status quo were in violation of the bilateral agreements.

According to experts, Rajnath Singh's is a strong message to China not to escalate matters any further as India has the capability to protect its interests and will not hesitate to hit back if its national interests are hurt.

Indian forces' strong response to the PLA's aggression has rattled the Chinese leadership, says Lt Gen V K Chaturvedi (Retd). "The Chinese never expected such response from the Indian military, which not only has dug in its heels along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) but is also strengthening its positions."

He added India has successfully blocked China's 'salami slicing tactics' and told the Chinese to go back to positions before the end of April.

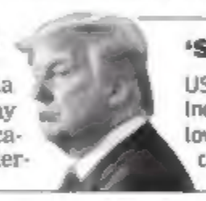
Talking to *TNIE* on condition of anonymity, a serving Army officer said the Defence Minister's statement has reaffirmed India's stand on the territorial dispute, standoff and disengagement. "The statement is a clear-cut red line on how much is acceptable and what is non-negotiable," the officer said.

Meanwhile, in a predictable response, Beijing blamed New Delhi for the LAC flare-up. "The relations between the two countries have been severely affected by the border issue. The cause and truth of the current tension are very clear, and the responsibility lies entirely with India," said Wei Fenghe.

A former diplomat, who did not wish to be named, said it was important that India stated its position. "We have seen statements from many quarters. The latest statement shows that India is not going to listen to China. We will put our foot down and stand up to them," he said. P9

DEFENCE DIPLOMACY

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh during a meeting with Uzbekistan's Minister of Defence, Major General Kurbanov Bakhodir Nizamovich, in Moscow on Saturday | PTI



'SITUATION IS VERY NASTY'

US President Donald Trump has said the situation along the India-China border has been 'very nasty' and that he would love to get involved and help. "We stand ready to help. If we can do anything, we would love to get involved," he said

China abducted five Indians from Arunachal Pradesh: Cong MLA

China's People's Liberation Army has abducted five people from Arunachal Pradesh, Congress MLA Ninong Ering said on Saturday. Narrating the incident on Twitter, the lawmaker claimed a similar incident had happened a few months ago. According to local media reports, the incident occurred at Nacho forest area in Upper Subansiri district. The persons - Toch Singkam, Prasat Ringling, Dongtu Ebiya, Tanu Baker and Ngaru Diri – had gone out for hunting, which is a very common practice in the area. Two other villagers managed to escape and informed others, a local newspaper reported, quoting the relative of one of those abducted P9

Indian Army rescues 3 Chinese nationals who lost their way

Amid the standoff in eastern Ladakh with the PLA, the Indian Army recently came to the rescue of three stranded Chinese citizens at the Sikkim border and assisted them in their safe return. "The three Chinese citizens lost their way near Sikkim at an altitude of 17,500 feet on Sept 3. The Indian troops helped them return safely," said the Indian Army. The Army personnel were prompt in protecting them – two men and a woman – from the vagaries of extreme altitude. "Realising the danger to their lives in sub-zero temperatures, the soldiers immediately reached out with medical assistance, food and warm clothes," said the Army

Ragini, 11 others named in Sandalwood drug case FIR

BALA CHAUHAN & MANJU SHETTAR @ Bengaluru

THE Central Crime Branch (CCB) police have named 12 people in the First Information Report (FIR) related to the contraband drugs case in Sandalwood. They have already arrested actor Ragini Dwivedi, her friend and RTO clerk Ravishankar, realtor Rahul Shetty and an event manager, Viren Khanna, and booked them under Sections 21, 21C, 27A, 27B and 29B of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985. The four arrested were taken for medical, including Covid test, after their arrest.

The FIR names Shiva Prakash Chappi, Ragini, Viren Khanna, Prashanth Ranka, Vaibhav Jain, Aditya Alva, Loum Pepper Samba, Prashanth Raju, Ashwini, Abhiswami, Rahul Thonshe and Vinay. It, however, does not mention the name of Ravishankar. Chappi works in the Transport Department and is the prime accused in the case. He is said to be a former friend of Ragini.

Thonshe is a close friend of Kannada actor Sanjjanaa Galrani. Samba is an African national and an alleged drug peddler, who used to supply contraband drugs to Ravishankar and also to some celebrities. He was also arrested under the NDPS Act.

The CCB has seized some contraband drugs, primarily marijuana, from the premises of some of the accused and the samples have been sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) for testing the purity of the drug, said a highly placed source. Meanwhile, Ragini has reportedly denied any connection with the narcotic drugs network and is not forthcoming with any information, added the officer. P5

THREE ARRESTED, DRUGS WORTH ₹44 LAKH SEIZED

The CCB on Friday raided a house in KR Puram and arrested three drug peddlers — A Subramani (26), Vidhus (31) and Shejin (21). They also seized contraband drugs worth Rs 44 lakh. Vidhus is a postgraduate in Computer Science from the UK while Subramani studied in a private school in Indiranagar and Shejin is a final-year student of hotel management.

RAIDS CONDUCTED IN BELAGAVI, C'DURGA

Ready-to-harvest cannabis plants, worth about Rs 2 crore, were destroyed by the police at Odeyarahalli village in Rampura taluk of Chitradurga district on Saturday. Three people have been arrested in this connection. In Belagavi, the police raided four locations and recovered 123.5 kg of ganja and arrested seven peddlers.

INTERVIEW

KARJOL ON RESERVATION

In the light of the Supreme Court verdict on the issue of reservation within quota, Deputy CM Govind B Karjol says the government will wait for what the larger bench of the top court has to say on the matter.

P3

SERVING AT THE EMPEROR OF TEMPLES

P2

120 acres of forest land worth ₹800cr recovered

MEERA BHAROWAJ @ Bengaluru

FOR the past 20 days, it has been hectic for the forest officials as they have started recovering encroached forest land in the Anekal Range. Till now, the Karnataka Forest Department has recovered a whopping 120 acres, worth Rs 700-800 crore, on the fringes of Bannerghatta National Park (BNP).

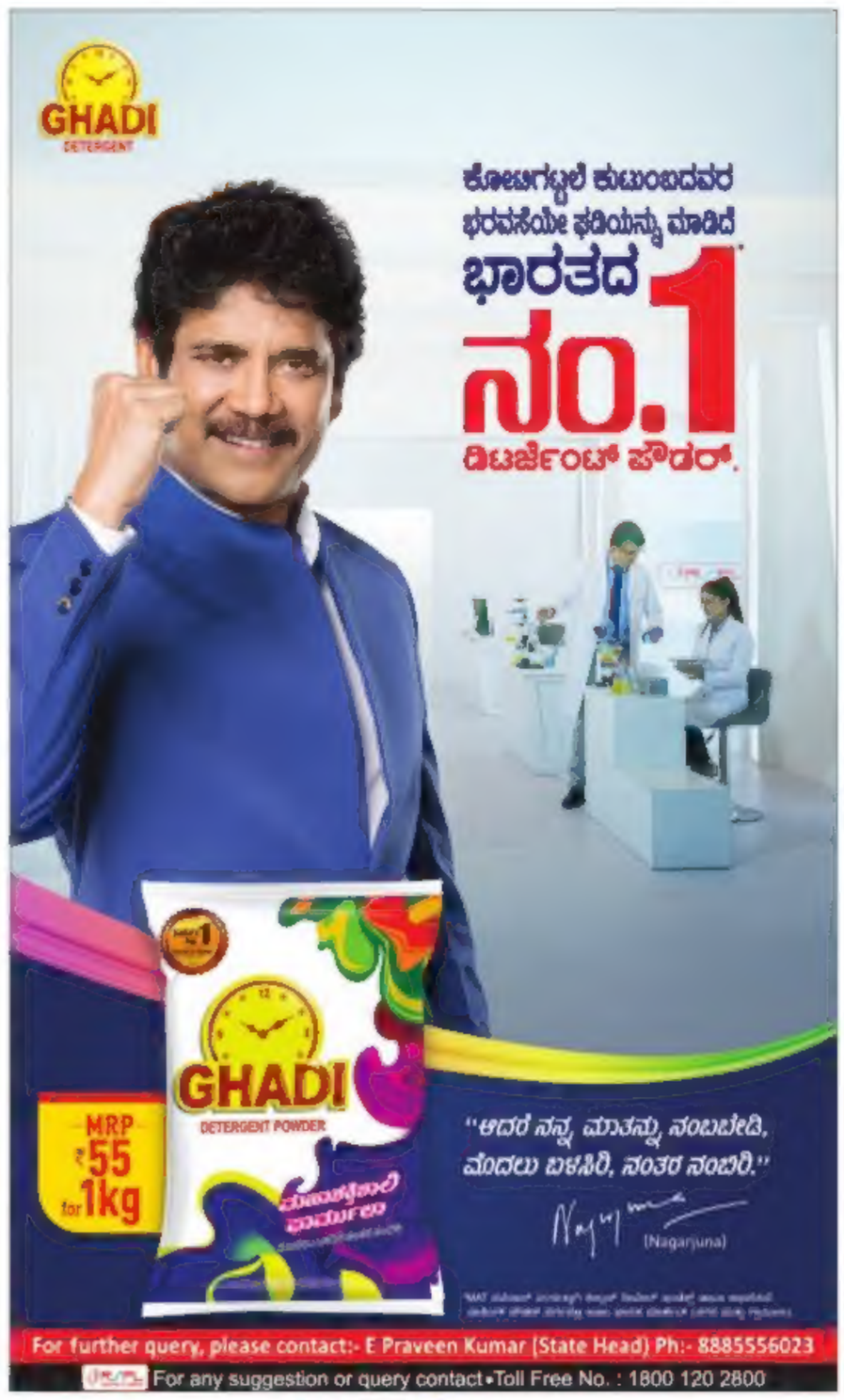
The department moved to recover the lands after the High Court vacated the stay last year on a slew of writ petitions filed by encroachers.

Forest officials said 180 acres had been encroached upon in Bhootanahalli Minor Forests (MF) to form a sprawling 'Athithi Layout' with about 300 sites sold to people under the garb of it being a revenue land. Another 60 acres in this illegal layout still remain to be recovered.

These forest lands were encroached upon by the owner of a college, a corporator, realtors, one retired DSP, land developers and politicians. Each of them had encroached upon about 10-20 acres. Overcoming all political pressures and threats, the department started the process of recovery on August 17 and is still at it.

The recovery process started under the directions of Chief Conservator of Forests Gokul, DCF Anthony Mariappa and ACF G Venkatesh. P7

A parcel of the encroached land that was recovered by the government



WITH THIS ISSUE

PLUS 12 PAGES MAGAZINE

SPREADING KNOWLEDGE

This village of teachers redrew learning curve

SUNIL PATIL @ Belagavi

THIS village seems to be celebrating Teacher's Day every day. Welcome to Inchal, the 'village of teachers', where there is at least one teacher in every household and hundreds of students down the years to appreciate their work.

Inchal in Saundatti taluk, with a population of about 10,000, has about 900 teachers working in government-aided schools. There are also some others who are working in the Education Department. And that's not all. Hundreds of Bachelor of Education and Diploma in Education graduates are awaiting placements and will add to the number.

A few decades ago, Inchal was a backward village haunted by murders, dacoity and other criminal activities and school education had become a nightmare. But then, the tide changed.

The head of the Inchal Mutt, Shivanand Bharati, along with three teachers, founded the Shivanand Bharati Education Society in 1975 with the objective of educating every child in the village. The Society established a high school in 1975, a PU college in 1982 and DEd college in 1985.

In the beginning, there were just a handful of students enrolled. But today, over a thousand students are being imparted education.

Satar Ismail Sab, a teacher from the village, said, "Shivanand Bharati Swamiji showed us that a big revolution can be brought about if one takes up the challenge to change society".